

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 1-17 were pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 9, 14, and 15 are independent. Following this response, Claims 1-17 remain in this application. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. **Interview**

Applicants thank Examiner Swarthout for the courtesy of a telephone interview on February 21, 2006, requested by the undersigned to discuss the rejection of Claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102. During the interview, the Examiner suggested an amendment to Claim 9 that he stated would result in Claim 9 being deemed allowable. In response, Applicants have amended independent Claim 9 to reflect the Examiner's suggestions. Accordingly, an agreement was made during the interview regarding Claim 9's patentability.

II. **Allowable Subject Matter**

Claims 1-8 and 14-17 were allowed and Claims 10-13 were found to contain allowable subject matter. Applicants thank Examiner Swarthout for this finding.

III. Rejection of Claim 9 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In the Final Office Action dated October 20, 2005, Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Divjak*. While Applicants traverse this rejection, to further prosecution, Claim 9 has been amended according to the Examiner's above referenced suggestion. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 9 is allowable. Moreover, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to dependent Claims 10-13.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Office Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Office Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability. Furthermore, the Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge
any additional required fees to our deposit account 13-2725.

Respectfully submitted,

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